THE INQUIRER

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ON BEING ORDINARY

IT is odd that an article in what must be assumed is not a widely read weekly should set off a national discussion about the Queen. The discussion should surely be about those who do the discussing. Prince Philip once said that the Royal Family were "ordinary people". Why should they not be allowed to be just that? It is assumed that by some means or other the Queen should be an "inspiration" to the nation, with Prince Philip, presumably, being a good second. This is the kind of inflated nonsense that makes the Monarchy bogus. No person ought to be sentenced to a life-time of inspiration. No person could keep it up. The rot in no time would set in. The Monarch, treated as a symbol of anything else other than the institution of the Monarchy could, sooner or later, be the victim of fraudulent cruelty. The wonder is that the Royal Family manages to keep all their ordinariness. The public stress under which they continuously live must be an exacting business. It is the semi-mystical, and the plainly herd-thinking supporters of the Monarchy, that make the institution well nigh impossible.

Never to be far away from the camera's eye; to have half the world, let alone one nation, constantly striving to pry into one's private life; always, as it were, to be under inspection, must be an ordeal that only a life-time of training, and an acquired poise and accepted convention can make possible to endure. The enemies of the institution of monarchy are those who by their demands make the institution nigh impossible. And this is as true of the anti-critics as of the critics.

Public Life

The trouble in all these exalted institutions (how hard it must be for President Eisenhower always to keep his grin) is that the ordinary man demands something different from his own ordinariness. He cruelly wishes to bend the knee to something different from himself. He must believe that he, having placed people in positions of importance, cannot be mistaken in his own choice. Somehow or other he must believe that all the institutions he is responsible for, and the people in them, are in a manner God-ordained. If they should fall below this his cruelty can be brutal. The institution of the monarchy in this country could provide centuries of examples of this. And political life could provide many more.

The truth of the matter is that public life can be turned into one big sham—not primarily because those who live the life seek the sham, but because it is imposed on them by the suppositions of their positions. Prime Ministers, for instance, must be "great men". Dictators must be "great, great men". The truth is frequently opposite to this, and for dictators always so. This is known, but it does not alter the common delusion and demand.

On Being Equal

The truth of public life, as revealed by so many memoirs, may probably be summarized by some impressions of Somerset Maugham.

"I have known," he writes, "in various countries a good many politicians who have attained high office. I have continued to be puzzled by what seemed to me the mediocrity of their minds. I have found them ill-informed upon the ordinary affairs of life and I have not often discovered in them either subtlety of intellect or liveliness of imagination. . . . But since I have seen statesmen who did not seem to me to be very clever conduct public affairs with reasonable success I cannot but think I was wrong: it must be that to govern a nation you need a specific talent and that this may very well exist without general ability."

Real democracy lies in the reality of the persons who make it. The most difficult of all attainable political ideals is equality. It is flaunted in all political constitutions and probably denied in as many of them. It is assumed that it is an easy thing for all people to be equal, when in actual fact it is hard for any man to know what equality is, and harder still to practise it. Never in history have peoples been more "equal" than they are now, yet it is doubtful whether peoples have been shot through with bigger shams. What are the actual facts that underlie the crust of public life as it is generally presented in news and organs of opinion everywhere? That there is a contrast between the sham and the reality is clear enough.

And this, of course, extends to what may be called the Establishment in this country. This arrived at its apotheosis at the crowning of the Queen. It was a moving and splendid occasion witnessed by millions through television and the cinema. But soon after had to come the trouble about the possible marriage of Princess Margaret, and for a number of people this assumed degrees of cruelty that called in question many of the assumptions in the ceremony of the coronation.

These very much involved the Establishment. What is the relationship between conventional and irreligion in this country? It is a question which goes deep.

THE TRUE SECURITY

By Dr. Ford Lewis

(Minister of the First Unitarian Church, Stockton, California, U.S.A.)

(This is the first of a series of articles, taken from recent addresses, that Dr. Ford Lewis will contribute to "The Inquirer".)

MUCH of the difficulty our generation has experienced in trying to establish and maintain a workable system of international relations is due to our ignorance of history and consequent lack of perspective. We have heard too much about how the wide spaces of our planet separate the races and nations of men. To-day, the oceans are not so much barriers as they are highways, and the insubstantial air forms a very substantial bridge which grows shorter with every new advance in aeronautical engineering. Physical science has shrunk the globe and joined the continents as effectively as though some infinite hand had shoved them together, but no science of society has prepared us for it. As a result, the ideal of human unity has become an ordeal of human discord.

Time is the knife that divides us, at home and abroad. In our families, fathers are severed from sons and mothers from daughters as surely as though they lived on remote planets. What parent can fathom the depths of a child's world? What child can possibly appreciate the complexity of his parent's life, the difficulty of his decisions? Despite moments of closeness approaching complete identification, we soon drift apart on our separate orbits and reach out in vain for a unifying empathy, some common experience in all our turnings, as the necessary fundamental of understanding.

World-wide is our plight and old as the ages. The dust under our feet was once the flesh and bones of men who struggled conscientiously, like ourselves with small success, to solve the same problem. The plot is always the same. The lines may vary a little and the characters are always different, ourselves comprising the latest cast, but the fatal enigma always lying sphinx-like athwart the path of human progress: How to achieve the imaginative capacity to enter into the particular situation of another person or another nation and develop real sympathy and understanding.

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We have a word for that power of vision and mutual comprehension as it applies to close friends or persons made kindred through love. We call it empathy, and it has a meaning which comes very close to describing mankind's most ancient basic need. But we have no such warm word, in our language, at least, to speak such a truth about a whole nation. More tragic yet, we have no truth to speak, no international empathy or passion to describe.

We speak of "amity" and "comity", but these are diplomats' terms, used to describe the policies of governments, not the spirit of a people. As for finding a global equivalent for the close sympathy and identification we sometimes feel toward persons, and coining a word for it, the lexicographer will have to wait for the fact. The word will follow the deed. Meanwhile, our Sphinx, looking remarkably like a mushroom cloud, still challenges us with its riddle, the riddle of human understanding, and threatens our destruction in the best classical tradition unless we can solve it.

No parent can hope to understand his children unless he has some grasp of his own nature, and particularly some memory of his own youthful nature. Among psychologists this has become a truism. We must literally "become as a little child". And here is a useful analogy, for it is equally true and critically relevant to-day that no nation can understand the baffling behaviour of a younger nation, especially, unless it understands something of its own history.

For example, now that the U.S. has become the leading nation of the non-Communist bloc, we cannot understand how other nations can be neutral. Opponents we expect, and can deal with, but neutralists exasperate us beyond endurance. So much so that when the President in the spring of 1956 spoke an understanding word for neutralism and noted that we had a history of neutralism ourselves, he was taken to task by the Luce magazines as being "in over his head" and was said to have made a "disconcerting mis-statement of U.S. history".

Three days later the Secretary of State joined the ranks of those who disagreed with the President and all but linked neutrality with immorality in one of his public utterances. It is temptingly easy for a leader to assume that "he who is not with me is against me", but in our case, we ought at least to be acquainted with our own record of the past. Far from being wrong about American history, President Eisenhower was disconcertingly right. Beginning with Washington's parting warning against "entangling alliances", a strong strain of neutralism has flavoured our diplomacy throughout most of our history, only we have called it "splendid isolation".

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Another area in which we need to cultivate perspective for the sake of the true security is in the matter of what constitutes national good taste. At a public forum where Egypt's seizure of the Suez was being discussed, the French consular representative on the panel could offer no more forceful argument against his Arab opponent than his repeated complaint, "We don't trust Nasser—he doesn't keep his word". Most Americans would probably agree. But Americans, of all people in the world, should understand at the same time that young nationalism is bumptious, brash, and raucous by nature. It is anxious to right what it considers old wrongs and is impatient of the drawing-room *politesse* of old-line diplomats who stand in the way.

Whenever we come to the end of our patience with the hell-raising tactics of a Nasser or the monumental obstinacy of a Nehru, let us, for the sake of humility and a token approach, at least, to international empathy, review the record rather carefully. *Item 1*: Fully one-half of the 350 years we and our forebears have spent on this continent we have spent in colonial status as little more than a tail on the British kite. This ought to help us understand colonialism as colonials see it. *Item 2*: Following two major wars with the Mother Country within a span of four decades we sat out a century of uneasy, dangerous diplomacy, the chief characteristic of which was, on our side, a hearty and vigorous participation in the favourite sport of politicians—twisting the tail of the British lion. Why should we be shocked at the same rude behaviour, now that we are the dominant nation? *Item 3*: During the period between the war of 1812 and the war of 1914, European travellers, following the example of Kipling and Dickens and many others, described Americans as crude, boastful, bellicose and greedy. Who are we to prate of bad manners?

We shall find it difficult to believe that because a half-dozen states defaulted in their interest payments after the panic of 1837 on bonds held by the British, or repudiated them outright, that our great-grandparents comprised a "nation of swindlers" as the British claimed. Still less will it seem in retrospect that every Englishman was a "blasted British bond-holder". But to see ourselves in that light and in that relationship with another, more powerful country ought to help us understand our power relationship with the under-developed countries of to-day.

As with persons, so with the collections of persons we call nations. Only by reference to our own arrogance and pride, past and present, can we understand the arrogance and pride of others. Only as we understand our own early national yearnings and aspirations, our own appointment with destiny and our adventure toward it, can we tolerate the same spirit in others. As we would have our own transgressions blotted out and remembered against us no more, so let us forgive those who trespass against us. For once we have come to terms with our own conscience and shriven our own hearts we recognize that the wrong we thought had been done by another has miraculously vanished away.

COMMENT

On Holiday

I AM writing these lines on a terrace washed by the waters of St. Wolfgang Lake, Salzburg, in a sunny interval between the heavy showers that have marked the weather of the last few days. The surrounding peaks are clear, and are mirrored in the waters of the lake, and all the guests of the hotel seem full of hope that soon they will be able to enjoy to the full what must surely be one of the loveliest and most attractive places on earth. Yesterday I was able to walk with a few of the other hotel guests along the muddy field-tracks to the ferry leading across the narrows to the town of St. Wolfgang, the town of "The White Horse Inn" fame.

Every hundred yards or so there was a little shrine, or a Crucifix, or even a little chapel, reflecting the Catholic piety of the people round about. In one of the chapels I was surprised to see, embroidered on the altar-cloth, the words: "O Mary, vouchsafe to reveal thyself as our Mother". I had, of course, read Heiler on Catholicism and the tendency of the Mary-cult to become a species of polytheism, but I have never realized it so clearly as when I saw those words. Taking the ferry, we went over to the other shore, and had refreshments on the terrace of the famous White Horse Inn, which reminds me of the intention to cover the White Horse at Westbury with concrete. But isn't that simply to destroy the original by substituting something else? Surely, "the scouring of the White Horse" was an essential part of the old memorial. It is just like concreting over a grave that we can no longer be bothered to tend.

Serious Arguments

I was surprised when I got the bill at my lodgings for my week's stay to find that the total cost, including service, was only £5, as I had counted on the quoted charge of 16s. 8d. per day. The food is excellent, the comfort adequate and the people varied and interesting. I share a table with a retired Bavarian professor of chemistry and his wife. He is a Catholic, and she a Lutheran; but she seems to make up for having married a Catholic by showing extra zeal for Protestantism. When she found out that I was a minister, she tackled me on Anglo-Catholicism. It appears that she had studied very carefully the pictures of the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II and had noticed that the archbishops and bishops were dressed in mitres and vestments resembling very much those of the Roman Church. Was the Church of England Protestant or Catholic?

Willy-nilly, I had to enter on a discussion of a theological question for which my supply of conversational German is quite inadequate. As my exposition of Anglo-Catholicism proceeded she grew more and more indignant, until I felt inclined to tell her that really it was not my fault, and her husband smilingly suggested that she either calmed down, or else, as the next day was Sunday, she should ask the management to set up a pulpit for her in the lounge so that she could express her own views at greater length. She laughed, and I told her that she reminded me of the story of a Jew who was taken before a magistrate for an alleged breach of peace. He seemed to have a reasonable excuse, and the magistrate asked why he had not told those facts to the policeman. "How could I when I was handcuffed?" said the defendant. And so we parted in good humour for the night.

Schweitzer to the Rescue

The next evening, however, she tackled me on my own belief. Didn't we Unitarians have Confession or the Lord's Supper? Where did we differ from the other sects? Not believe in the Trinity? What *did* we believe? Why, we must be something the same as the Jews! "No", I said, "we are not Jews. Our belief is on the whole that of Albert Schweitzer, who not long ago became an honorary member of a German Unitarian congregation". Once again the professor became my ally. "And Albert Schweitzer", he said, "is the saint of the twentieth century".

The Scientific Outlook

In a copy of *Die Welt*, said to be one of the best weekly papers in the world, that I found lying about in the hotel, I read a statement by an American Atomic Research scientist that has made me think a bit. "I can't read political writings", he is reported to have said. "I simply can't endure texts in which all verbs are used only in the future tense". I suppose that contact in all one's waking moments with the lifeless facts of science, makes one forgetful of the place that ideals must take in properly organized human life, whether of the individual or of society. Ideals necessarily look to the future, and all schemes of future social organization or regeneration of human conduct make constant use of the future tense. When one thinks of the place that science must occupy in human life in the future, one can only wish success to every attempt, as lately at the University College of North Staffordshire and at Cambridge, to leaven the training of scientists with the healthful spirit of the humanities.

The Absent-Minded Professor

A professor had made purchases at several shops. At last he discovered that he had left his umbrella somewhere; and so he visited, one after the other, all the shops he had been in. At last, in the seventh an assistant, seeing him coming, went to meet him with his umbrella. "Thank you very much", he said, somewhat moved. "You are the first honest man I have met this afternoon. The other six have all bluntly denied that they had my umbrella".

A colleague of his was once visiting a friend when a heavy storm set in. "Stay with us for the night, Professor", said his friend. "We can let you have a bed—you simply can't go home in this terrible rain". "Thank you very much", said the professor and suddenly disappeared. In vain the host searched the house for him. Ten minutes later, however, he appeared panting and dripping wet. "Goodness", said the host, "where on earth have you been?" "Oh", said the guest, watching the puddle that was growing around his feet, "I have just been home as quickly as my legs would take me, and fetched my pyjamas".

Commentator.

FROM LAYMAN TO MINISTER

By Francis Terry

(THE REV. FRANCIS TERRY, OF SHREWSBURY, CONTINUES THIS SERIES OF ARTICLES.)

I HAVE now been a Unitarian minister (including a probationary period) for twenty-five years. Before that, I had done war service (in the ranks), and a University course, and had then spent ten years in the law-office of my father's firm. But it was only in the last two years of that time that I could properly be described as "a Unitarian layman": for eight to ten years previously I had been merely a churchless ex-Unitarian. Thus, in retrospect, my time as a Unitarian layman seems only a brief stage in a longer process, which reflected the general ideological turmoil of the inter-war years, and the recovery from it. It is from this larger context that my story derives its significance.

I was born into Unitarianism. From when I was five my parents took me to a Unitarian Church attended by my four grandparents and numerous uncles and aunts. I was early interested in the preaching, which was temperate, candid and enlightened, with a stimulating range of interests: but I was disturbed by a contrast between the violently unworldly tone of the New Testament and the cosy kindly complacency of a prosperous congregation. There was an element of unreality—which, I think, was the cause why members very easily dropped away from church-attendance through change of cir-

cumstances on removal to another district. In 1915, when I was sixteen, our own household moved to a place where there was no Unitarian Church; and though we returned to the old neighbourhood five years later, none of us resumed attendance. By then, also, all but two or three of my other relations had dropped away: and so had my two closest school-friends, both of whom had come from Unitarian homes.

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This falling away was not only due to breach of habit during unsettled times. There were deeper causes. During the period preceding 1914 the world had offered a delusively flattering and re-assuring view to the sort of people who set the tone in churches. The things around them were mostly lying bright-side-uppermost. They could see very clearly the virtues and achievements of men of their own class and race and civilization. The dark underside of these things was largely hidden from view, and could be easily ignored. These tendencies had special scope among Unitarians, who were in acknowledged alliance with the spirit of the times, and had repudiated orthodox theories of human sinfulness without putting anything adequate in their place. Thus, our churches were exposed to the full effects of disillusionment, when a new period of history, and new schools of thought, began to expose things dark-side-up. I remember writing to a friend, in the middle nineteen-twenties, that I was avoiding facing the challenge of religion, as I dreaded the unpredictable changes it might make in my life, but that the one thing of which I was sure was that I should never return to the superficial optimism of Unitarianism.

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When, a few years later, I could avoid the challenge no longer, I found that on the points which the orthodox churches insist on as essential, I was still unalterably Unitarian. Fortunately, the pulpit of my old Church was occupied by Rev. Herbert Crabtree, who had left a promising secular career to enter our ministry, and, without any superficial optimism, had a deep sense of spiritual religion. He eased my return to our movement. When, however, I looked beyond the local church and its minister, I saw the denomination in a grave state and without the spiritual resources to face a menacing future. It was not a ship on which I could comfortably remain a passenger: if I stayed, it must be to help make it sea-worthy. What was needed was a deepening of spiritual life: this was the responsibility of ministers: therefore I must become a minister. And so I started on a new way of life, partly ambitious to be a leader at a critical stage of our history, and partly accepting a religious vocation as a path of humiliation and sacrifice.

At first, this is how I envisaged my work. "Here", I thought, "is Unitarianism, like a building on the right site but in a bad condition: the more showy parts are in a dangerous state and may have to come down: but that is not my business: I will look for a place where I can quietly work at the foundations, strengthening them to support the eventual work of re-construction". But in practice it is not possible for a minister to find any place where his work is not disturbed by a sense of impending crisis. Financially, we are dependent everywhere on resources which are inadequate, or likely soon to become so. The standing and "goodwill" of our churches are dependent on by-gone reputation, which is fast receding from memory. By spiritual habit, our members too often expect to receive from their church a type of confidence and peace of mind which is incompatible with modern standards of psychological realism. Where these facts are not being honestly faced, the minister feels that he is being hired to keep up a deception: when they are faced, the strain causes deep disturbance to all concerned. In all its aspects, the work of a Unitarian minister in this generation is constantly turning upon problems of disillusionment—helping people to come to terms with painful truths and find a way through them. And the minister has also plenty of disillusionment of his own.

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As a minister I have also had to grapple at close quarters with some basic religious problems which, as a layman, I might have been able to brush aside. Originally, I had been still on the rebound from churchlessness and non-religious ideologies, and inclined therefore to a conservative and traditional type of Unitarianism. "Why", I asked, "should we not follow the accepted patterns of church and ministry, since our differences are only theological?" It is a plausible view, until one actually lives the life of a minister. Then I found that the traditional conception of the minister's position depends upon doctrines of church authority which I do not believe; and, without that belief, one cannot sincerely fill the role which orthodox tradition assigns to a minister. I found also that traditional ministerial attitudes evoke a deep psychological resentment, which I was bound to regard with sympathy and respect. This helped me to realize that our difference is not only theological but religious, requiring us to develop our own types of piety and church-life and our own conception of the ministry. I still believe that a healthy religious community should contain some specialists, who make religious matters the main business of their lives, and that their co-religionists ought somehow to contribute to the cost and share in the benefit of this. But I think we shall have to evolve new and independent methods of doing this, and keep clear of the traditional attitudes. Our movement has hardly yet begun to find itself. We have hardly begun to take seriously the "priesthood of believers". We are wasting and discouraging the spiritual capacities of our laymen. In the course of development, most of our familiar institutions may be superseded. But if we go forward with faith and teachableness, the value of what emerges will more than repay the labours and losses by the way.

LOOKING AROUND

By Basil Viney

(Another of Basil Viney's nature articles.)

THE changes in the distribution of the various forms of wild life are sometimes unexpected and puzzling. Presumably, we have to thank our rather thoughtless and indiscriminate use of certain insecticides for a diminution in the number of several small insectivorous birds—also the foolish replacement of hedges by wire fences in many districts. The draining of ponds and marshes may account for the very serious decline in the number of all the birds of the swallow family, and also of the swifts.

But what is quite inexplicable to me is the fact that this year, in South Wales, the house-martins are practically non-existent, whilst the swifts (for the last few years only to be seen in any numbers in the mountains) have shown a welcome increase.

Talking of house-martins—one curious reason for their sudden declension may be that only when present in considerable numbers can they cope with the sparrows. For some ten years running a pair of martins began to nest under the eaves of our house, but only on one occasion did they bring off a brood. On all the other occasions the nest was stolen, as soon as it was completed, by the sparrows! Now the usual practice of the martins was for one to collect the mud and bring it to the other to fix in place. And as long as one was there the nest was safe. But as soon as it neared completion they would take an hour or so off together, and then, on their return, would find the sparrows in possession.

When there is a whole colony of martins nesting close together there is safety, but the gregarious habit does seem to be essential for the rearing of the future generation!

The activity of the smaller and more intelligent birds appears to be incessant as long as there is daylight (and that includes dawn and twilight). No wonder they need more food in proportion to their size than mammals—and this though their relative weight is lighter, owing to the needs of flight.

But once dusk deepens into darkness they are suddenly quiet, and one may assume that, excepting the nocturnal species, they may be unaware of night. We had a curious

instance of this not long ago. A more than usually tame and pert robin made a habit of coming into the house whenever a window was open. One day he was inadvertently shut in when we left the house. Arriving home after dark there he was in the room, aroused and alarmed by the sudden burst of electric light. Normally, once the window was opened, he would fly towards it, pleased apparently that he could please himself whether to depart or remain. But this time there was no response. His usual calm deserted him, and he flew with evident terror round and round. It seemed as though he was even more afraid of the dark outside than of the sudden radiance. Then it occurred to us to turn out the light there and to switch it on in another room where it would shine through an uncurtained window into the garden. We returned just in time to see Mr. Robin flit into the now illuminated bushes!

It is so easy falsely to assume that other animals sense things as we do. Bees and butterflies see colours, but it would seem that their sense of form is crude. How else should they mistake bits of paper, or even flames, for flowers? That being so, how can the refined patterns on many flowers be explained as mere devices to attract them?

IT OCCURRED TO ME

By Muriel Hilton

MANY years ago I saw Charles Morgan's play, "The Flashing Stream", and the other day when in the public library I saw a copy of it and decided to read it. There is an illuminating essay preceding the play on "Singleness of Mind".

It is interesting how often to-day we come across a modern interpretation of age-old truths. Charles Morgan is a provocative thinker and he is here giving a modern commentary on those words which we know so well, "The pure in heart shall see God". Modern psychologists state the same truth in their way—that is, in the endeavour of man to unify his many selves into a unifying whole. Well, whatever it is called it is most difficult in a commercial go-getting world like ours to focus our lives to one exalting purpose, for in what has been called "the aspirin age", the tendency is "to go nowhere in all directions".

When we were away last year in the vine-growing country I often thought about those bunches of grapes that we would not see ripen fully. No vine would bear its best or fullest fruit if it remained unpruned. Suckers have to be lopped clean away so that to-morrow's fruit might be large. A certain attention has to be given in order that clusters might be large and good.

This simile of the vine has been used a great deal when contemplating this subject of singleness of mind, and yet how forceful it is.

We are always having to lop off unnecessary hindrances, forego certain indulgences, reject this and that in the achievement of the single mind, and surely it is here that we find we have a large measure of freedom, more than is realized.

In "The Flashing Stream" one of the characters, Ferrers, says, "Sometimes when you are awake in bed thinking, between waking and sleeping, your thought runs quieter and quieter like a still flashing stream, like Truth itself without reason. . . . And in that moment we see as it were in a flash the truth absolute and shining. "The pure in heart shall see God".

It is comforting to know that this experience is, and can be, known to those in all walks of life. It does not depend upon education, upon the accumulation of knowledge, and worship is surely one of the best means to its attainment.

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One of the most deplorable aspects of modern life is the booming of personalities. The legions of entertainers who not only entertain but appear in all manner of other spheres, such as advertising, are becoming ludicrously important. These shadowy figures that appear on films and T.V. screens and who always make front-page news have stealthily become part of our every-day living. I am always amazed to read of the presents and letters that these people receive, probably from those who would not think of bestowing an unexpected present on somone they knew. The Dales, the Archers and the saccharine-sweet smooth personalities of T.V. announcers are becoming to some, more significant than their next-door neighbour. As one fan quite seriously said, "They are really much more pleasant and like dogs cannot answer back".

It seems to me that life must have become very lonely for many, and it is likely to increase if the unreal becomes more attractive than the real. That remark about the advantages of T.V. relationships, if one can call them that, made me think that perhaps we are all in danger of becoming casual about real people.

Going out shopping the other day I passed two people who live in a road near ours and though usually we pass the conventional time of day, on this particular occasion I decided to break through these and stop for a few moments to talk. It was surprising what a pleasant animated time we had, and now whenever we meet we go a little further in our explorations. There is a deplorable amount of nervous trouble caused by loneliness, and I believe it only takes a little determination and courage to break through the isolating barriers, for few people do not want friendliness and fellowship. They usually only turn to the shadow figures when either they or other people have failed.

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A friend kindly sent me Littleton Powys's book, "Still the Joy of it". This passage from a letter to him from his wife Elizabeth Myers made the most appeal.

"Our lives are what we make them. No one is born happy, you have to make it against many odds. If we all sat down and thought of the misery at large and concentrated on it we should all be in the madhouse. But we have something better to do with the short precious time God has given us on earth, and the whole secret is to find happiness in spite of everything. That's the battle of life and if all were easy there would be nothing to live for. We are not here to pick and choose, we are here to do the work we must do and we've all in our way got something to accomplish."

CORRESPONDENCE

Letters should be addressed to the Editor, "The Inquirer," 14 Gordon Square, London, W.C.1. They should not in general exceed three hundred words in length.

"A Statement by Scientists"

SIR,—Your attitude towards the statement by the Quaker Scientists has caused me bitter disappointment. You say, "the signatories have done their best," but, "it is not good enough"; Has the religion for which your paper stands any relation to Jesus and his ideals? He stood alone—with those ideals—against the ruthless Roman army of occupation. Sweeping aside all the queries about how and when and why, of which your editorial is full, he declared, "Love your enemies." "Go the second mile"; What is your criticism? Wasn't it good enough—or was it? If your answer is "it wasn't," then I say, kindly but plainly, there is no reason at all for the continued existence of your paper. Christianity—whether Unitarian or any other sort—is Following Jesus. Just that! And the Quaker Scientists are calling to their fellow scientists, and indeed are calling to us all, to mean our religion, or to be honest and pack it up?

Yours, etc.,
MAUREEN BEST.

(Further correspondence on this subject will be printed next week.)

The Right Answer

SIR,—I should have thought the answer to a compliment on a minister's sermon would be—

(a) "Yes, I was quite pleased with it myself"—if he were

or

(b) "I didn't think it was one of my best"—(if he thought it wasn't).

Are ministers so uncritical that they are not able to evaluate their own output?—Yours,

Exeter. *Enid Shears.*

An Invitation

SIR,—It is proposed to commence a morning Sunday School, followed by a service, this autumn in North Chingford. Friends interested in this project are asked to contact me for further details.—Yours,

"Tor View,"
24 Holly Drive,
Chingford, E4

RALPH E. GODDARD.

THE INQUIRER

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NEWS REVIEW

International Congress for Liberal Christianity and Religious Freedom

The plans for the 10th Congress of the "International Association for Liberal Christianity and Religious Freedom (I.A.R.F.)" are beginning to take shape. This Congress will be held from August 9 to 13, 1958, at Chicago, U.S.A., and since 1907 it will be the first Congress in America, the country where the I.A.R.F. was born, and where it still has an important part of its supporters.

The Congress theme: "To-day's Religions can meet the world's needs to-day", offers an opportunity of finding out how far the five world religions — Judaism, Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam — can contribute to the solution of the present world problems. Prominent representatives of these five world religions will address the Congress in five main lectures. The participants will have the opportunity to discuss these introductory lectures.

Besides this panel discussions are planned on:

Modern Science
Racial and religious tensions
Mutual assistance and world organisation
Education and the arts
Philosophy and Theology

A preliminary programme can be obtained from the Secretariat of the I.A.R.F., 32 Rouwenaar, THE HAGUE, Netherlands.

Oxford Conference

A holiday conference on the subject of "Our Churches in the Past and in the Present," was held at Manchester College, Oxford, from July 29 to August 3. Sessions took place during the mornings, the afternoons and evenings being left free for social or other activities. In a series of lectures the Rev. H. Lawrer Short traced the history and development of Unitarianism in England since 1688, a period to which little attention has hitherto been devoted, and in a concluding lecture, Principal L. A. Garrard summarised the theological position of the present day.

The numbers attending the conference were not as large as had been hoped for—partly, no doubt, owing to the fact that it was arranged and advertised rather late, when many people had already fixed their holidays—but everyone was agreed that the experiment had been worthwhile. Each lecture was followed by lively and stimulating discussion while the Rev. E. Shirwell Price, who was staying in the district and attended most of the sessions, gave an interesting account of his experiences in America, where, apparently, conferences are taken much more seriously (and more energetically) than here.

This first venture was intended to be exploratory, and if the response was not all that the organisers had expected, it was felt that much had been achieved. Thanks are due to the lecturers for their scholarly papers and to Manchester College for its hospitality. It is proposed to hold a further conference next year, details of which will be advertised and circulated in due course.

F.T.W.

INTERNATIONAL UNION OF LIBERAL CHRISTIAN WOMEN

Conference at Arnhem, Holland, July, 1957

By M. K. Garry

A very happy and successful conference of the International Union was held at Oolgaardshuis, the liberal christian conference house standing in a big garden by the Rhine at Arnhem, from July 19 to 22. Twenty-six of us were in residence, fifteen from Great Britain, six Dutch, three Germans, one Swiss, one from the U.S.A., and other Dutch women came in daily. The theme of the conference was, "What can we liberal christian women do to help church life?" After a beautiful opening service, conducted by our president, Dr. Cornelia Boer, who is the *directrice* of Oolgaardshuis, the first paper was given by Dr. Dorothy Tarrant. She said that this is a critical age for free christianity, and while women are doing a tremendous amount of work in the churches, there are some ways in which they could give more help. Dr. Tarrant went on to say that we must guard against a spirit of inferiority, the legacy of past ages, which was content to leave all the business and organisation of the churches to the men. God was spoken of universally in the masculine, and women have been dominated by the Mary-like idea of passive worship, or the domestic cares of Martha. The women's groups in churches can and often do form a fine training ground for wider church service, and women can bring to their churches their experience of running their homes. An intelligent interest in modern thought with study and discussion of new ideas would also be of great use.

Mrs. Coquoz, of the Albert Schweitzer College, Churwalden, Switzerland, in another paper, took up the question of liberal women's share in the education of children and young people to a religious outlook on life. She spoke of the importance of knowing ourselves first, and said that to understand modern youth women should study all forms of modern expression in art, literature, etc. Youth today is struggling against the effects of materialism, intellectualism, and the suppression of God. Mrs. Coquoz also described briefly the pioneering experiment in international education in preparation for a religious approach to life which is being carried on at the Albert Schweitzer College, and of how the mother of young children, by an understanding and practice of her own beliefs can bring up her children in a religious atmosphere.

The papers were followed by discussions in small groups, after which full meetings brought forward points for discussion and put questions to the speakers. Among these were: "How can liberal christian women get over their ideas to non-liberals?" "Can liberalism stand up to communism?" "What is the limit of tolerance?" "Is it better to stay in a non-liberal church than leave one?" "What can we do with the delinquent, unsatisfied youth?" "How can the busy mother of small children find time to educate herself?"

On the Sunday morning, we all attended service in the Remonstrant Church at Arnhem, where we were welcomed in English by the women visiting minister; in the evening, an opportunity was given to visit the Arnhem cemetery. The Saturday afternoon included visits to an Old People's Home founded and run by liberal christians, and to Hilversum, where we saw the liberal christian broadcasting station and another. After that we had a social evening, during which we heard short talks on the I.A.R.F., the Albert Schweitzer College, and Oolgaardshuis.

All felt it had been a happy and fruitful conference, and a desire was expressed to have more such meetings. There was time to talk and to learn of the difficulties of liberal christians in other countries, especially in east Germany, where one member came under an unusual cross. At the business meeting it was resolved to try to increase membership of small groups within the national societies, both to raise more funds to expand our work and to increase interest.

In her closing service, Dr. Boer again referred to the parable of the leaven hidden in three measures of meal, of which she spoke before, and said that in all our activities, we must begin by being good liberal christian *women*.

A detailed report of the conference, with notes of speakers' groups, will appear later in the year in the International Union Newsletter.

(Continued on page 276)

THE CALENDAR OF THE CHURCHES

SUNDAY, AUGUST 18, 1957

THE LINDSEY PRESS

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Change of Address

Rev. J. W. Mate, Chudleigh Cottage, 38 High Street, Collumpton, Devon. After July 31.

(Continued from page 274)

"WHERE THE SAINTS HAVE TROD"

Are Unitarians doing less for other people than they used to do? This much is certain, that some Unitarians still work energetically and devotedly for various good causes. Consider the remarkable feat of Mrs. Hannah Cocks, of Brookfield Church, Gorton, Manchester. In eight years she has raised over £1,000 for a charitable cause.

In 1949, Mrs. Cocks, who had already helped many good causes over a great number of years, became interested in Broughton House for disabled ex-servicemen, at Kersal, Manchester. She immediately resolved to concentrate her energies on raising funds to support it. Sunday by Sunday, over the ensuing years, she has gone out in the morning, knocking from door to door and asking for a small contribution. Each contributor has been requested to sign against the amount in her collecting book. During the week Mrs. Cocks has visited public-houses: she has called at everyone in the Gorton and Reddish areas. Usually she has made a preliminary call and been received by the landlord coolly and helpfully. He has generally advised her that Friday evening is the best time for her visit: and he has been sometimes surprised and impressed when he has been asked to count the collection and enter the amount, with his signature, in Mrs. Cocks' book.

Gradually, more and more people, of all creeds and no creeds, have become interested in her efforts. They have bought articles for public sales, and supported bring-and-buy sales; collected cigarettes or donated other gifts for Christmas parcels, and given coloured cards from which Mrs. Cocks has made calendars for sale. Since 1949 she has given every patient at the House a Christmas parcel. And though she never calls at the same address twice to ask for money, she does go out at Easter asking for eggs for the men. Your reporter has seen them laid out on the carpet in the front room of her home.

Towards the end of last year Mrs. Cocks had the opportunity of appearing on television. As the result of a suggestion from a lady visitor at Broughton House, she was featured in the ITV programme "State Your Case". Her task was to justify her right to receive a gift of £100. She earned it, not for herself, but for disabled ex-servicemen. She presented her case with such success that only this year she received a cheque for £100, and this was duly passed on to the Broughton House treasurer. This brought the total of her gifts to over £900, and six months later she passed the £1,000 mark.

Now, to give one thousand pounds to Broughton House earns the right to have a bed named in your honour. People have earned this right by leaving the requisite amount in their wills; but only one person has earned it by the efforts of her brain and hands and feet during her lifetime. It was, therefore, a very remarkable ceremony for which a small company of friends of Mrs. Cocks and officials of Broughton House gathered in one of the wards on July 25. Mrs. Cocks' late husband was a former president of the Sunday School Association. This year, their daughter, Mrs. Hannah Thrasher, is president-elect. It was she who, by her mother's wish, unveiled the commemorative plaque. The Rev. Fred Cottier, formerly minister of Brookfield Church for many years, and therefore well acquainted with Mrs. Cocks, spoke simply but with warm feeling about her wonderful achievement; and then he and Brookfield's present minister, the Rev. Maurice Bonner, shared a brief act of devotion and dedication. The serving of tea by the staff of Broughton House concluded a memorable afternoon. But the heroine of it all was relieved when it was all over. Not that she thinks her work is done: at the age of 76, she has no intention of resting on her laurels. But she is happiest when plying her needle, or posting calendars, or going from door to door. She is now seeking customers for bags she is making, either for the beach or shopping. Whether she will raise another £1,000 is not predictable. What is certain is that the men at Broughton House will continue to bless her for her love and service.

D. R.

Retreat to Advance

The seventh annual Retreat organized for and within the Unitarian movement was held at Manchester College, Oxford, from July 15 to 19. The three conductors were the Rev. E. H. Kersley, the Rev. Barbara Thomas, and the Rev. Charles Easton.

It was good to have with us those who had not been to a Retreat before, as well as "old hands". The addresses and devotions, against a back ground of silence, were deeply helpful and very welcome, as is always the case. We owe a big debt of gratitude to the conductors. Our grateful thanks are also due to the college.

M. R. D.

Women's League: The Preston District held their Summer Meeting at Blackpool South Shore Church on June 26.

A Bring and Buy Sale was held in the Schoolroom. The proceeds to be given to the Home at Great Hucklow for Blankets. Mrs. Bridel Smith opened the Sale with dignity and ability. One can hardly realize that she had reached the ripe old age of eighty-four years. Mrs. Pritchard, the President, was in the Chair. The amount raised was £12 13s.

Officers of the Unitarian Young People's League

1957-1958

President	—	Ivan Knowlson (London)
President-Elect	—	Joe Fairhurst (Hindley)
Vice-President	—	Shirley Roberts (Stalybridge)
National Secretary	—	Geoffrey Waywell (Stand)
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